

I cannot imagine that the Legislature, by a side-wind, intended in this irregular manner to widen the thoroughfares, as it would thus only be done piecemeal, at the option of the building owners; and the lines of streets would present a serrated jagged appearance, like an awkward squad regiment, and be full of nooks and nuisance corners. On the other hand, if the house is set back, the paving committee will take possession of the ground surrendered, pave up to the line of the house, and the inconvenience, if there be any, of projecting cornices, will exist, to the same injury to the public as before.

Such, I apprehend, would be the working of the Act, if the interpretation which is given by the award is correct; but I would submit to the Official Referees, with much deference, supported, however, by the opinion of many professional brethren, that this legal construction of the clauses is inconsistent with the obvious practical tendencies of the other enactments in Schedule E., which authorise projections, and which I now propose to examine.

The first clause in the schedule relating to the subject, "as to copings, parapets, cornices to overhang roofs," &c., expressly sanctions and permits all such architectural decorations to project beyond the "general line of fronts in any street or alley." The next clause, also, "as to all balconies, verandahs, porches," &c., in the like manner expressly permits such projections beyond the general line of fronts, with the proviso that they shall not overhang "the ground belonging to any other owner." I presume that in this clause the word "owner" includes the ownership of a public footway (though the interpretation clause of the term might suggest a doubt thereon), and the difference, therefore, between the two clauses is evident, viz., that all architectural projections are allowed, but that all constructive projections, though allowed, must not stand or overhang any other than the building owner's ground.

Now if these two clauses stood alone, there would be no difficulty in the case, and they seem fully adequate for the due protection of the public. They prevent porticoes, verandahs, shop-fronts, &c., being thrust out over the adjoining owner's property, but they allow all cornices, and other architectural decoration connected therewith, to project;—but then follows a clause, enacting that all projections from the walls of buildings, including steps, cellar doors, and area inclosures, must be set back so that "they shall only overhang or occupy the ground of the owner of such building, without overhanging or encroaching upon the public way."

Though we are accustomed to strange anomalies in Acts of Parliament, yet in this case one can scarcely suppose that the legislature had enacted that a thing might be legally done by one clause, and that it could not be done by almost a successive clause. There would surely have been some exception or provision made in the first to meet the contingency in the second; but there is, however, none. The Act expressly enacts that cornices may project beyond the line of houses, a case that occurs most frequently in the city, but the official referees say no; the subsequent clause nullifies the first.

It appears to me that there is an ambiguity in the word projections, which I submit is used in three different senses in the three clauses; in the first, it is applied to architectural decorations, which are allowed; in the second to projections which do not form a portion of the building, such as balconies, verandahs, &c., and which are also allowed, with a proviso; and in the third to projections which do form essential parts in a building, such as projections on plan (a wing and centre for instance), or projections in elevation, such as bay windows or corbelled rooms. These are prohibited unless the house is set back.

I do not propose this as an ingenious reading of the Act, but as a construction of the clauses, which has been held reasonable by many persons who have endeavoured to rake out sense from obscurity. Indeed, during the two years' experience of the Act, I believe this construction has been adopted in most of the districts, and acted upon in some cases by the district surveyors themselves. If a different interpretation is now to be enforced, it would be advisable

to obtain at once a revision of these clauses, which will otherwise inevitably cause the greatest dissatisfaction and bitterness. Judging from the modifications which the official referees have suggested on other points, where the Act has been found impracticable, and from the disinclination which they evince to follow up harshly the many ill-considered enactments of the Act, I should imagine they would throw no obstacle in the way of obtaining a modification on this point, and thus prevent what they as practical men must feel, much inconvenience to all building parties, without adequate advantage to the public.

I fear, however, that this award adds only another instance to the many already developed, of the danger of legal legislation upon building matters, without a careful preliminary investigation by all parties interested therein.

I am, Sir, &c.

T. L.

IMPORTANT TO THE MAKERS OF DRAWING PENCILS.

CAN any one tell us where good pencils may be bought? We have speculated at artists' shops from Rathbone-place to Cheapside, and have tried over and over again every maker that once had a reputation in the profession, and at last we throw down the blunted stump, and declare there is no refuge but in pen and ink. So, having consigned our last dozen to a truly useful purpose, that of fire-wood, we just use the only other instrument, in the manner in which it best accommodates itself to our hand—videlicet, writing, and beseech all our readers to help us, if they can, out of the difficulty. Really, what we have endured since "the mine" first began to "fail" passes all belief. Every thing has been tried; good penknives for cutting would give now and then a tolerable point, but at the first touch upon the paper off it broke, though we had pressed scarcely hard enough for a single trace. We have long since abandoned all minute work and sketching, as involving far too much labour, and preserve every scrap that we thought lightly of when our first gross of pencils was unexhausted, now with peculiar care, as we should works of the old masters. We have arrived at the conclusion, that much of the day can be far more profitably spent than in cutting wood. We know not yet whether we may try lithographic chalks, as being likely to retain a point better, and to require less cutting than the present quality of pencils, or whether we shall recommend some maker to use "gravel and gas tar," as a far better substitute than coal ash, for black lead. Ink lines can be spunged out, but for pencil drawing now-a-days there is no manner of speedy removal. India-rubber used to be the fitting implement; there is now no chance but to scratch out with the knife. What can be the reason of this falling off in the manufacture, of which every one in the profession is complaining? Makers are numerous, and they are able to shew letters of recommendation from artists, yet architects cannot get a pencil having any one of the qualities which they require. We could not wish for better pencils than we were supplied with about ten years ago; now, the same maker tells us that the lead cannot be got of equal quality, and that if he adds any other ingredient to improve it in one respect, the mark cannot be rubbed out. But we fear that the manufacturers do not know what are the particular qualities requisite in a pencil for architectural purposes; it would be well worth their while to find out, as the evil is so commonly felt, that really good pencils would meet with an extensive sale. Such as are made are perhaps quite efficient for schools and drawing-masters, but certainly are not at all adapted for careful and minute work, or for plan drawing, which can hardly be got through without frequent alterations. The pencils are perhaps fit for sketching on a large scale, for foliage, or may have a good tone of black, and these are all the qualities that the testimonial writer, who tries them on a scrap of paper with a blunt point, thinks of inquiring into; he never drew any thing more architectural than a rustic cottage; for such a purpose they may do well enough. Now we think we may render an acceptable service to pencil makers if we specify what are the requisites of a pencil suited for architectural drawing. It must be recollected that there is

no kind of drawing which requires so many different qualities in perfection; and the pencil which might do for one purpose, it is quite possible would be useless for another. This is the reason, though pencils good enough for some purposes may be met with, why we still complain; and surely the precise nature of the want needs only to be explained. Modern skill has never yet failed, when the object has been directly entered upon with a perfect understanding of the nature of the want. Every pencil, then, should have these qualities:—

It should admit of being cut to a point as fine as that of a needle, without risk of breaking in the cutting.

It should be firm under the pressure requisite in drawing, and should mark a clear even line without crumbling away.

It should contain no grit.

It should admit of being easily erased by the rubber, without leaving the slightest mark upon the paper; yet the lines should not be smeared by paper or ruler passing over the drawing.

The various kinds of lead should be carefully sorted, and great care should be taken that each pencil is marked with the proper letters. If the last point be unattended to, much time may be lost by the draughtsman, and a good pencil may often be condemned without sufficient reason.

Lastly, all these qualities are required in every pencil, whatever its mark, the HHH being no means the only one that the architect uses, though the lists which the manufacturers publish would have it so. Those lettered HHH, H, HB, and B, are in constant use for one purpose or another. The harder kinds of lead should also be made into small pencils for the bow compasses, &c.

We believe that if a pencil have these several qualities, it will be satisfactory to most architects; nevertheless, it is possible that essential requisites not here mentioned may occur to others; and if so, it is very desirable that they should be communicated through these pages, in order that the whole case may be fully in the hands of the makers.

For drawing on wood a very hard pencil is generally preferred, and for mere outline, or plan drawing the advantages are very remarkable. HHHH and HHHHH pencils are therefore prepared by some makers, but we have never yet detected any difference in hardness between such of these kinds as we have used. In these pencils the same requisites are needed as in those used on paper, except that as lines cannot be taken out with India rubber, it is not essential to provide for that kind of correction. The grit which is frequently found in these kinds should be carefully avoided, as it is desirable that the pencil should make a clear even line upon the wood, but without any furrow. But we have often found a common pencil, fit for no other purpose, answer admirably for wood.

We trust we have now said enough to induce the manufacturers of pencils to take greater care in the preparation of an implement so essential to every architect. Though the supply of Cumberland lead may have proved exhaustible, we are convinced that this loss will be supplied as soon as the makers know exactly what is wanted, and that there would be sufficient patronage from the profession to bring them a handsome return for whatever exertions they might make. The present want of good pencils, all our readers will agree, is becoming an evil quite intolerable.

PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE.

A PICTURE, which is believed by some, well qualified to judge, to be a contemporary portrait of the great bard, has come into the possession of the excellent Bishop of Ely. It was found in an obscure broker's shop, where nothing could be learnt of its previous history. It has no name on it, but cleaning has made apparent to one part, "Æt. 39, 1603," which agrees with the age of Shakespeare in that year. We have not yet seen the picture, and cannot at once, after so many disappointments, give implicit credence to the statement; what we know, however, of those who have examined the portrait, and of the judgment of the Right Rev. Bishop himself, induces us to believe it will be found correct, and that a great discovery has indeed been made.